

THE CANDID EXAMINER.

"EXAMINE YOURSELVES, WHETHER YE BE IN THE FAITH ; PROVE YOUR OWN SELVES."—Paul.

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Examination of Rev. E. W. GOODMAN'S
Sermon preached at Mount Pleasant.

(Concluded from page 132.)

The scriptures urged by Mr. G. to prove endless misery, with one or two exceptions, have been noticed in former numbers of the Examiner ; and as he has advanced nothing new upon them, to bring them forward in this place, would be only a repetition of what has heretofore been laid before our readers. There are, however, a few particulars which we shall notice, that the reader may have a sample of his mode of applying the scriptures. He writes

"We are informed, in the 5th chapter of Matthew, and the 12th of Luke, by him, who is the Saviour of sinners; who in his allusion to the state of the finally impenitent, could not misrepresent, that they shall not be delivered from their prison till they have paid 'the uttermost farthing and the very last mite.' Now consider the import of this declaration, and then ask yourself the question, whether it is probable that a hardened, impenitent and blaspheming spirit, in this prison of despair, has any thing to pay, towards that debt of gratitude and love, which we all owe God, as our father and benefactor. It is a debt that can only be paid by perfect love and obedience. If this cannot be paid by us in time, on account of our entire depravity, permit me to ask, whether a soul that is damned, is less depraved than before it left this house of its tabernacle? If hopeless weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, in mad despair, and eternal howling, to the storm of the fury of God's wrath, can pay this debt, then we are warranted in saying, they will pay the uttermost farthing and the very last mite."

Mr. G. is correct in his statement that there is a "debt of gratitude and love, which we all owe God," and that "it is a debt that can only be paid by perfect love

and obedience." But how does he endeavor to support endless misery from this? By suggesting that this debt "cannot be paid by us in time on account of our entire depravity," much less when the soul has "left this house of its tabernacle." Is this requirement just? is it reasonable? Is it just and reasonable in God to require of man what is *impossible* for him to perform? Such cruel injustice should not be ascribed to a God of righteousness and equity.—God says that it is required of a man *according to what he hath, not according to what he hath not*. But it would not be more unreasonable and unjust to require an abundant harvest from the barren rock, than to require "perfect love and obedience" from "*entire depravity*." It is true that God requires perfect love and obedience; but he has appointed means by which these are accomplished. He has given Jesus for this purpose—he has sent the Holy Spirit for this end. These requirements will be binding on every individual, in whatever state and condition they may be placed. And to argue a depravity which renders a conformity to these requirements impossible, or a withdrawal of the means by which this love and obedience is produced, is to argue that God will be unjust in requiring impossibilities.

We will give one more example of Mr. G's application of scripture.

Imbue

"And the spirit of inspiration, in the III. chapter of Malachi, asks the question "who may abide the day of his coming; and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." And yet this is the time, according to the principles of some, when the sinner has a perfect right to come forward and demand his salvation, even though he be one who shall be alive on the earth at the coming of the Judgment; for he has accomplished his sufferings in this world! And according to others, this wrath cannot long continue; for the time will come, when all will have a right to demand their freedom.

But, at the judgment day, we are warranted in believing, that the wicked will say to the rocks and mountains, "fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." *

At what time does Mr. G. support that Jesus shall come "as a refiner and purifier of silver?" Answer. "At the coming of the judgment." When is this coming of the judgment? Answer. At the last day, when the scenes of this world shall have been brought to a close. This is Mr. G's opinion concerning the time of the 'coming of the judgment.' And at this time, i. e. at the *coming of the judgment*, Christ is to come "as a refiner and purifier of silver." A greater mistake in applying scripture cannot be conceived. It requires but very little penetration to discern distinctly, that Christ coming *as a refiner and purifier of silver* took place in his personal ministry when on earth; and he still presides in that character, and will until the purpose for which he came in that character is accomplished.

It is astonishing that any person who has read the scriptures with any degree of attention, should refer this coming of Christ *as a refiner &c.* to the last day—to a supposed last final judgment. The prophet

Malachi first says, "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." This messenger was John the Baptist (see Mark 1, 2.) The prophet then speaks of the coming of Christ of whom John was the forerunner, and of the manner of his coming. "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." John the Baptist referred to the coming of Christ *as a refiner's fire, &c.* as follows, "I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Thus it is plain that the coming of Christ, referred to in the passage quoted by Mr. G. from Malachi, was in his personal ministry, when he came after John the baptist, baptizing with the *Holy Ghost and with fire*. The object of his coming *as a refiner's fire and fuller's soap*, was to "purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Does Mr. G. suppose that Christ will come at the judgment day to *refine, purify* and reform mankind, that they may offer righteous offerings to the Lord? No, this is not his opinion—yet he has applied a passage of scripture to that day, which distinctly implies this opinion. But we forbear to dwell on

inconsistencies any longer. For reasons which we have before given, we shall not introduce the repeated instances of Mr. G's misconstruction of the scriptures. Besides it is by no means pleasing to us to repeat over after another, such manglings of the word of God. We have given our readers a specimen—we refer them to the sermon for the remainder. The hard speeches contained in this sermon against the doctrine of the final restitution, must remain unnoticed—we return not railing for railing. The heavens must receive Jesus 'until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken, by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began.' Then Zion's watchmen shall see eye to eye.

Reflections on the love of God.

LORENZO AND CLARISSA.

Five years had elapsed since I saw my friend, Lorenzo, the day after his union with his amiable Clarissa, cast a "lingering look" towards the venerable cottage of her father, and drive towards the rural spot destined for their future place of residence. The pursuit of happiness had led me from the circle of my friends, into distant parts; where I too often observed the painful scenes of misery and wretchedness which sin, ignorance, and folly produce, and which are entailed upon our species, by the want of a resolution to discard them, or a destitution of that knowledge which would annihilate the procuring cause of every moral evil.

While attempting to investigate the causes of inquietude, of woe, and of abject wretchedness, I had been led to conclude, that the want of an acquaintance with the pure principles of the gospel, is perhaps, the cause, of incalculable misery. Surely, said I to myself, our kind CREATOR has not, in establishing the laws of nature, rendered necessary, nor proper, those acute miseries so often experienced by his offspring.....The fowls of heaven, and

beasts of the field, are evidently more happy, in proportion to what they are capable of experiencing, than the reputed "lord of creation." And is it not true, I inquired, that we invent a thousand wants and evils, in the gratification and practice of which there is, at best, but a momentary enjoyment? It is, if I mistake not, our pride, our extravagance, our ignorance, and perhaps our unchastened ambition, which so frequently leads us to the portals of wretchedness and despair. Let man limit his desires to his own fireside, or at most to the circle of his friends, who, having been tried, are found worthy of confidence; and, with a becoming resignation to the will of Heaven, his happiness will be complete, or at least as perfect as can be expected here below.

A train of reflections, similar to the foregoing, were passing through my mind as I rapped at the door of my friends. With mingled emotions of joy and apprehensiveness, I entered their dwelling, and saluted the friends of my youth. I had heard but little of them since their settlement in life; and it was impossible to restrain a degree of anxiety proportionate to the interest I felt in their welfare. Perhaps their humble dwelling had become the residence of disappointed hope and its concomitant misery: perhaps they had sought for happiness in the giddy circles of fashionable folly, and like thousands of others, had been rewarded with vexation and remorse: and perhaps, by embracing the corrupting dogmas of a fashionable religion, they had become callous to the emotions of friendship, or the voice of charity. But these apprehensions were soon dispelled.

We were soon seated by the cheerful fire, engaged in conversation. By the side of the interesting Clarissa was seated her son of about four years of age, and, in her arms, an infant daughter of as many months. The glances of the father had attracted my attention; and every thing I beheld tended to convince me, that the happy pair were blessed with mutual affection. Health and contentment were seated upon their countenances, and the competence which their honest industry had acquired, was apparently received, and enjoyed, with thankfulness and gratitude. Surely, said I to myself, if happiness is to be found on earth, it is here. The mother caressed her in-

fant, with the fondness of one whose soul was wrapped up in parental love, and listened, occasionally, to the innocent prattle of the urchin at her side, with a mother's fondness.

A momentary silence had occurred, and was agreeably interrupted by the mother. "These little ones," she said, addressing herself to me, "are considered by us, as rich blessings bestowed by heaven itself; as seals of our plighted and mutual love.—Since our marriage, on which occasion you was present we have been blessed with prosperity and happiness. Our all, this side the grave, is centered in our lovely children. Our joy is unutterable, while we witness the expansion of their faculties; nor is our happiness diminished when we retrospectively survey our efforts to provide for them.....Our industry has been blessed, by our heavenly Benefactor; and we trust, that by a continuance of our efforts, with the blessing of heaven, our own and their wants will be supplied. Lorenzo, you perceive, (she continued,) is apparently happy, and my enjoyment is enhanced by doing all in my power to make him so, and is not destroyed by any suspicions of inconstancy or want of affection for myself." As she paused, I found it difficult to refrain from expressing my emotions; and, involuntarily responded—you must be happy indeed!

A cruel thought obtruded upon my mind, and cast a momentary gloom over the pleasing scene. Oppressed with its weight, I ventured to express it. Your affectionate husband, madam, and your little children, with whose happiness your own is evidently identified, are doubtless indescribably dear to you; but, have you never been told, that, on account of the sin of our progenitors, even your little children have become liable to the wrath and curse of God! Yea, have you not been told, that possibly your FUTURE bliss will be enhanced, by beholding their unutterable eternal misery? And have you not been taught to believe it your duty to be WILLING to witness all this, if it should appear to be the will of God to have it so? The chill of death seemed for a moment to pervade the faculties of the mother; but soon a heavenly smile irradiated her countenance, and dispelled the unwelcome gloom. She replied:—" 'Tis true,

we have heard such sentiments advanced, even from the sacred desk; but blessed be God, the impressions of that nature, so abhorrent, so destitute of rational piety, so repugnant to enlightened reason; nay, so hostile to the revelation of Heaven—have been eradicated by the illuminating spirit of eternal truth. Our minds have long since been liberated from the bondage of such unholy opinions, and we heed them not!" The light of Jehovah's countenance seemed to inspire her with love divine, as she proceeded. "God is Love; and hath commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners in due time Christ died for us. Nor did he die for us alone. He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. He died to redeem us from all iniquity; he was the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and we, being sinners, and numbered among transgressors, feel for ourselves, that we have an interest in our Redeemer. But those little innocents," she said, "who know no law, and are consequently incapable of wilfully violating any, whether human or divine, are not exposed to the penalty of any moral rule. Moreover, they were set forth by Christ, as patterns for our imitation, and well would it be for us all, if we imitated their humility and innocence more carefully. Yea, our blessed Saviour hath said, 'suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of heaven.'

How then, can we doubt, therefore, that if they are taken from our arms by death, they will be embraced by our Saviour, and nourished by the God of all grace? No, sir, she continued; we, imperfect, as we are, love our children; but God, Oh! delightful reflection! loves them and us, with a PERFECT LOVE. Believing thus, we are truly happy; and it is our heart's desire and prayer to God, that every parent may have the same holy and peace-giving faith."

As he entered, a tear of joy was seen trickling down her cheek, while a glow of generous pride, on the part of the happy Lorenzo, seemed to say "she is the idol of my heart."

The happiness of the moment was indescribable. Thy gospel, great God, I inwardly ejaculated, how precious—how consoling! Thy love, all gracious heaven, how

vast, how stupendous!—How little is known of thy nature, by those who fear thine implacable wrath! and how superlatively happy are those who know thy will, and **KEEP THY COMMANDMENTS.**

EXTRACT.

RELIGION.—That term so much abused—so little understood, demands, and should receive the notice due to its sacred requisitions. No task imposed on man is half so difficult, as that of deciding with *clearness* and precision, what are his honest impressions of the Deity and his government. The Pagan, the Mahometan, and the Christian, have each their different modes of evading or eluding questions, which no man ever yet was, or ever will be furnished with capacities capable of comprehending—much less of explaining, to such as are like himself, but

"Dust in the wind—or dew upon the flower."

Of all the "dwellers upon earth," none have evinced so rational a conception of the great Creator and his attributes of goodness, as the native wanderer of the forest—son of nature, and child of simplicity ! for the *improvement* of whose moral condition in a word over which we have no jurisdiction, our sympathies and our purses, are alike laid under equal contribution—by way of filling up that chasm in the attentions of the eternal Father, which his multifarious cares in the government of so many worlds, prevent him from bestowing, without our dutiful assistance ! If this be really so, where is he, able to inform us

"——— Why, on Orellana's stream,
"Th' untutor'd Indian dreams of happier
worlds

"Behind the cloud-topp'd hill?"

or why, disdaining our impotent aid, he turns to the blush with nature's simple eloquence, the pious sophistry of the schools?

Religions—or rather *creeds*, are as diversified as the human complexion; and what shall appear in one quarter of the globe, a sacred observance of each holy rite, will elsewhere be pronounced an awful rupture of every moral obligation. Amidst all this chaos of sentiment, this *Babel* of conviction, where is the created being who shall guide us from the labyrinth, to the day-

dawn of truth?—"All on earth is shadow—all beyond it, substance"—and *substance* nowhere else exists. There are those indeed, concerned in the promulgation of theories, invented by themselves, who strain every nerve, and exhaust every argument to convince the unreflecting of special providences, particular inspirations and marvellous communications appertaining exclusively to their own sect:—whilst at the same time, all who take the liberty of the age of miracles to have passed by, consider such labor as fruitless as that of

“——dropping buckets into empty wells
“And growing old in drawing nothing up.”

On a topic so transcendently important, as that which connects the future hopes of man, with the mercy-seat of the Most High, nothing can be uninteresting ; nor can any thing awaken to the exercise of sleepless vigilance, so readily and so justly, as an incipient encroachment upon his right of investigation, and latitude of inquiry after truth. If any earthly privilege demand exemption from invasion and dictation—here is one. Yet it is my firm belief (and in this I am not alone by thousands) that a systematic and well laid plan, has long been in progress, in this and some other States, for bringing every secular right and privilege under subjection to sectarian *surveillance* ; and that this lamentable end would ere long be effected, but that the redeeming spirit of independence, education, and indignant forethought, in this country at least, accompany *equa pede* the onward March of mind !

Shall I be asked for the grounds of such opinion?—Witness, the often repeated endeavors to fill the legislative seats with sectarian devotees ; witness, the stratagem of Mr Yates, to introduce his *gingerbread* “Tracts” into the public schools—witness, a late celebrated “Circular,” brought forth at Albany, to pave the way for the coming of “Church and State”—witness, the officious attempts to stop the running of Mails, the Steam Boats, and lastly Canal Boats, on Sundays—witness, the late censorship establish over the kitchens of all good house-wives—in search of their bible—“*et id omne genus,*” *eum multis aliis ad infinitum*. Is there an American proud of his rights, and jealous of his honor—*mentally*

as well as *corporeally*, who will say that nothing is meant in all this, more than meets the eye? I pity his dullness, and cannot envy his tranquillity!—Without watchfulness, he may lament too late.

The divine author of the systems we profess, whose authority is quoted on all occasions, never lent his countenance to the preposterous absurdities, that have been set in array to terrify mankind. *His* life was one of humility, meekness, suffering, poverty, want, and privation. "None ever saw him laugh—many had seen him weep"—and had he lived in these days, he would have found multiplied cause for the expression of his sorrows, in the follies of many who affect to inculcate the lessons of his heavenly wisdom. When I can bring myself to believe in a *partial* God, a being frail and weak as myself, I may consent also to be made wretched by confiding in many a "baseless fabric" of modern dogma—and not before. Meantime, relying on him, whose attributes will be found perfectly consistent at the last; and who, while he marks the sparrow in its fall, lends a father's ear to the humblest aspirations of the contrite heart; I shall prefer being of the number of those who believe it to be religion; to "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly"—to pray that all who are in any trouble or "distress of mind, body or estate, may have a happy issue out of all their afflictions"—to do the Samaritan offices of pity to the helpless and the wretched—to "let our flock clothe the naked, our table feed the hungry, and deliver the poor from oppression"—to raise the fallen and encourage the desponding—to condole with him whose soul weeps in blood, over the sorrows of mortality—and, so far from insulting, standering, and reviling the prostrate and the unfortunate;—to sympathise in all cases with the disappointed heart and broken spirit, that have come to look upon existence, in reality but as a pilgrimage of pain, and the world as a vale of tears!

ANECDOTE OF. GOV. PENN.

In 1699, Governor Penn, when in Pennsylvania, was informed of some choice land, not included in his former purchase of the Indians. He caused inquiry to be made of the chiefs whether they would sell it to him. They replied that they did not

wish to part with that land, as the bones of their fathers and their mothers were lying there; but still to please their father Onas they would sell some of it. For a certain quantity of English goods they agreed to sell him as much land as one of his young men could walk around in a day; "beginning at the great river near Coaquanoc," now Kensington, "and ending at the great river just below Kallapingo," now Bristol. The bargain being made, a young Englishman much accustomed to travelling, was selected to lay out the land. His walk both astonished and mortified the Indians. When they came for their pay, the Governor perceived dissatisfaction in their countenances, and asked the cause.

They replied that the young man had cheated them.

"Ah, how can that be?" said William Penn. "Was it not of your own choosing that the ground should be measured in this way?"

"True," replied the Indians, "but the white brother made too big a walk."

Some of Penn's commissioners became warm, and said that the bargain was a fair one—that the Indians ought to stand to it, and if not they ought to be compelled.

"Compelled!" replied the Governor, "how are they to be compelled! Don't you see that this points to murder?" Then turning to the Indians with a smiling countenance he said to them—"Well, if you think you have given too much land for the goods first agreed on, how much more will do?"

With this the Indians appeared much pleased, and mentioned the number of yards of cloth, and fish hooks, with which they would be satisfied. These were given, then the Indians shook hands with the governor, and retired smiling and happy. The Indians being gone, William Penn looked around on his friends, and lifting his hands and eyes exclaimed—"O what a sweet and cheap thing is charity! Mention was made just now of *compelling* these poor creatures to stick to their bargain; that is in plain English to fight and kill them—and all about a little piece of land!"

This account is the substance of the story as related in Weems' Life of William Penn. It is so characteristic of that re-

markable man, that there can be little doubt of its genuineness and authenticity.

How happy it would have been for the early settlers of all the American colonies—and how happy for the numerous tribes of aborigines, had all our ancestors possessed the pacific policy and disposition of Governor Penn! How much anxiety and distress, and how many myriads of lives would have been saved! And who can help wishing that the people of Georgia, at the present time, might be blessed with a William Penn, for their Governor? In that case, how easy it would be to settle all difficulties with the Creek Indians.

Friend of Peace.

From the Universalist Magazine.

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Question. Who were the Scribes and Pharisees?

Answer. They who disfigured their faces, and were of a sad countenance,—who thought themselves righteous, and despised others,—who loved to pray, standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets,—and who compassed sea and land to make one proselyte.

Q. What did they say of Jesus Christ?

A. They said he had a devil, was a gluttonous man, a wine bibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners.

Q. Who did they say believed on him?

A. They said it was that part of the people who knew not the law, and were cursed. They said it was the *world* which had gone after him.

Q. Did they attempt to reason with him?

A. Not very often. And when they did, they were put to silence.

Q. How then did they attempt to defend their doctrine, and to confute his?

A. By excommunicating them who believed on him.

Q. Did they not excommunicate those who *confessed* him, rather than those who believed on him?

A. Yes: I should have said, By excommunicating them who *confessed* him.

Q. Who, at the present day, most resemble the ancient scribes and pharisees?

A. They who copy their example.

R. C. U.

Serenity.—A military officer being at sea

in a dreadful storm, his lady, who was sitting near him, and filled with alarm for the safety of the vessel, was so surprised at his composure and serenity, that she cried out—"My dear, are you not afraid? How is it possible you can be so calm in such a storm?" He arose from a chair lashed to the deck, and supporting himself by a pillar of the bed place, he drew his sword, and pointing it to the breast of his wife, exclaimed, "Are you not afraid?" She instantly replied, "No, certainly not." "Why?" said the officer. "Because," rejoined his lady, "I know the sword is in the hand of my husband, and he loves me too well to hurt me." "Then, (said he,) remember I know in whom I have believed, and that He holds the winds in his fists, and the waters in the hollow of His hands."

From the Universalist Magazine.

ANECDOTE.

The following is the substance of a part of a conversation between a Universalist and a Calvinistic Minister, which took place in Harwick, Mass.

Calvinistic Min. Why, yes, it is doubtless our duty to rejoice in the divine decree of reprobation.

Univ. But do you rejoice in it? are you heartily glad that God will doom your fellow-creatures to endless torment?

Calv. M. Ah, we have so much of the weakness of old corrupt nature in our hearts, at present, that it is difficult to reconcile ourselves to the will of God in many cases. I do not expect to be able, in this imperfect state, to contemplate the damnation of the impenitent with joy: but if ever I arrive at heaven, I shall then be enabled to say *amen* to the infliction of God's righteous judgment.

Univ. Do you not think that satan delights in the dreadful torments of sinners.

Calv. M. Yes.

Univ. The amount of the matter then is, that *now* you are not quite so good as the Devil, but hope, when you get to heaven, to be as perfect as he!

RELIGION.

How sublimely beautiful, how divinely excellent are the precepts of religion—it is the heavenly foundation on which the soul builds its hopes of lasting immortality; it

is the certainty which man cannot do away. Happy is he who suffers for thy sake, O source of life eternal!—Blessed the expectation of him who waits thy sacred reward, O religion—It is the healing balm to the wounded soul; it is the consolation of the oppressed, the hope of the sinner, and the stay of the saint—it is the offspring of the Deity, unchanging, everlasting—it is the lamp that enlightens the grave, and the sun that irradiates eternity.

FRIENDSHIP.

A Simile.—An aged oak, rearing its head exposed and alone on a barren hill; the rough blast whistles through its worn out limbs; the battering hail beats forcibly against its side.—Long it has braved the raging elements—long magnanimously withstood their fury—but its strength now fails, exhausted and fatigued; with no friendly wood in part to screen it from the assailing storm, it groans awhile beneath its fury, until at length its body and its branches are severed and dispersed by the all-sweeping powers of heaven's electric ball.

So it is with friendless man; the dark rolling waves of adversity, incessantly rush against him; the clouds, as black and rough they roll along the sky of sorrow, emit their sulphurous flames on his devoted head—amazed he stands, no friendly arm appears to rescue him from the roaring cataract of ruin; hence falls the wretched creature and sinks amidst the whirling waves to rise no more.

ALLEGORICAL.

A traveller, setting out upon a long journey, was assailed on the road by curs, mastiffs and half grown puppies, which came out from their kennels to bark at him as he passed along. He often dismounted from his horse to drive them back with stones and sticks, into their hiding places. This operation was repeated every day, and sometimes as often as twenty times a day. The consequence was, that more than half the traveller's time was consumed in chastising these dogs and puppies. At last he was overtaken by a neighbor, who was going the same road, but who had set out a long time after him. The latter traveller was very much surprised to find the other

no further on his journey, and on hearing the reason, "alas!" said he, "is it possible that you have lost your time, and wasted your strength in this idle occupation? These same animals have beset me all along the road, but I have saved my time and my labor in taking no notice of their barking; while you have lost yours in resenting insults which did you no harm, and in chastising dogs and puppies whose manners you can never mend."—*Niles.*

"There is no greater weakness than for a man to be ashamed of his religion, because ignorant men despise it. Would you be ashamed of the light of the sun, because a company of blind men ridiculed the idea of light? Would you be ashamed of the noble faculty of reason, because madmen denied its existence?"

TALES, ONE THE WISE MEN OF GREECE.

A sophist wishing to puzzle him with difficult questions, the sage of Miletus replied to them all without the least hesitation, and with the utmost precision.

What is the *oldest* of all things? God, because he has always existed.

What is the most *beautiful*? The world, because it is the work of God.

What is the *greatest* of all things? Space, because it contains all that has been created.

What is the most *constant* of all things? Hope, because it still remains with man, after he has lost every thing else.

What is the *best* of things? Virtue, because without it there is nothing good.

What is the *quickest* of all things? Thought, because in less than a moment it can fly to the end of the universe.

What is the *strongest*? Necessity, which makes men face all the dangers of life.

What is the *easiest*? To give advice.

What is the most *difficult*? To know yourself.

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